

Q & A: Ceramic Dental Veneers

Almost daily, whether at work or in social settings, we get the question, “Do you think I need veneers on my front teeth?”

Now, that seems like an honest, straightforward question, but to a dentist that question is similar to your wife asking, “Does this dress make me look fat?”

There is no safe answer. In my opinion, the person we see in the mirror every morning may not be the same one that everyone else sees walking down the street. Personally, the man I see is a little younger, a little skinnier, and has a little more hair up top. When it comes to teeth, I’ve learned that everyone sees their own in a little different light. Some people are perfectly happy with a set that eats well, whereas others want a Hollywood smile. As far as I’m concerned everyone is right. Get a set of teeth that make you happy when you look in the mirror and that make you more confident. Those teeth will be as individual as you are.

Ceramic dental veneers are esthetic facings that can change the size, shape, and color of your front teeth. Imagine a fake fingernail, made of glass that is chemically bonded to the front of your teeth. Ceramic veneers transmit light better than tooth colored fillings and can look so natural that even dentists have a hard time noticing them at a distance. In other words they can make your front teeth look the way that you have always wanted them to look. Here are a few common questions we get about veneers.

What is a cosmetic wax-up? Most veneer cases start with a mock up or model of what the final result is going to be. This is achieved by taking impressions of your current teeth and sending them to a dental lab to make a model of your proposed veneers out of white wax. You can then look at the model and see if veneers are right for you. A wax-up also allows your dentist to make a set of temporary veneers that are shaped similar to the final result. This allows you to start adapting to the veneers before the lab even finishes them.

How long does it take? Usually, the actual veneers take two visits. The first visit is to reduce the teeth for the facings and to place temporaries. The veneers are bonded into place on the second visit. Sometimes, there are extra visits for tooth whitening, cosmetic wax-ups, and for fine tuning the bite.

Why should I whiten my teeth before I get veneers? A clean, white, palate is always the easiest way to start a masterpiece. Veneers transmit light through therefore stained yellow teeth can sometimes lead to a compromised result. In cases of severely stained teeth we can take make provisions to prevent this.

Does it hurt? The short answer is no. I’ve had a couple of veneers on my broken front teeth for years and had no problem. In general, you will need to be numb for the procedure so a couple of anesthetic injections are all that is required.

As usual, my allotted space is running over. This has been a short list of the many questions we get so please email me or come by if I’ve left you wondering. Until next time, keep smiling.

-Questions can be sent to Drs. Parrish at ParrishDental@aol.com